



ELSAH HISTORY

Number Four

Third Quarter, 1972

Country Schools

This double issue of Elsah History devotes itself especially to country schools in the Elsah area. In Elsah itself, as most readers know, there was a two-room school teaching eight grades between the years of 1857 and 1970, when it was closed by District 100. Thus it was one of the last surviving country schools in the area.

Such schools have had a long and distinguished place in American history, creating as they did a literate populace throughout the vast rural areas of the developing nation. Now, with consolidation, the need for modern educational equipment, and easier transportation, such simple schools are rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

But while they existed they were able to impart values that have not been replaced by the larger and far more impersonal institutions that now educate the young. Resourcefulness, cooperation, and the kindness and decency necessary to living in a close-knit group are not nearly as evident in modern educational systems, though they too, of course, have their virtues. Still the phenomenon of the country school is one American can be very grateful to have had in its cultural heritage.

Literature and art have found a rich vein of ore in the American country school in treatments both humorous and serious. The establishment run by Ichabod Crane in Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820), "a low building of one large room, rudely constructed of logs: the windows partly glazed, and partly patched with leaves of old copy books," is a typical picture. "From hence," writes Irving, "the low murmur of his pupils' voices, conning over their lessons, might be heard in a drowsy summer's day, like the hum of a bee-hive; interrupted now and then by the authoritative voice of the master, in the tone of menace or command; or, peradventure, by the sound of the birch, as he urged some tardy loiterer along the flowery path of knowledge." Later,

and farther west, Tom Sawyer's escapade of lowering the cat through the ceiling in such a way as to snatch off the schoolmaster's wig and reveal his bald head, which the students had gilded when he was sleeping, continues this humorous vein. Nonetheless, more respectful treatments are found in Edward Eggleston's The Hoosier Schoolmaster and the books of Willa Cather.

Winslow Homer's genre paintings of country schools immediately bring to life the atmosphere of fun and business which produced many eager and basically well-furnished young minds. The village reconstructed at the Farmer's Museum at Cooperstown, New York, has inevitably included a country school, a typical culture hub of any rural community.

Many American intellectuals did their stint in teaching school in country towns. Herman Melville was one, teaching before he went to sea. Walt Whitman also taught school out on Long Island. Another was Henry Thoreau, who, for a time, taught school in Concord, Massachusetts, until he was fired for declining to whip the students as an aid to their studies. He re-



Mrs. Dorothy Ross instructs the upper room at Elsah School in 1968, near the end of its active existence.

ELSAH HISTORY, published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter issues by Historic Elsah Foundation, Paul O. Williams, editor. Subscription is with membership. Send to P. O. Box 117, Elsah, Illinois 62028. Rates: individual, \$2; family, \$3; sustaining, \$10 or more. Sample copies available on request.

marked that he felt "birch was a non-conductor." He went on to teach a private school with his brother, introducing such modern methods as the field trip and first-hand observation. He had considerable faith in the potential of village culture, but he thought it was largely unrealized.

The country schoolmistress as an object of romantic interest became a standard figure in the popular Western. Demure, beautiful, eastern, cultured, inexperienced, and harried, she won the heart of the rough but virtuous hero in Owen Wister's *The Virginian* and any number of other novels and films. In Bret Harte's "The Idyll of Red Gulch" she herself was won over by a Californian more rough than diamond.

The truth wasn't so rosy. The country schoolmistress had to handle the education of children just beginning as well as unruly boys who easily outweighed her. She often had to make the fire and sweep the school herself. She was not well paid, and she was subjected to meager living conditions. Her morals were the subject of intense public scrutiny, often by people who had no intentions of obeying themselves the strictures they wanted the schoolmistress to follow.

Yet country schools and their longsuffering teachers have provided America's rural population with an essential service, and have done it with a sturdiness and grace that the nation can be proud of.

Elsah had its share of well-remembered teachers, and many of its pupils have gone on to do very well. One, indeed, graduated near the top of his class at Harvard Law School.

Change came to Elsah with increasing swiftness after World War Two. In 1948 a consolidation vote was held. Elsah voted against the plan, 70 to 34. But the overall vote caused the Elsah School to become a part of District 100.

A new addition, including a brick wing, a hall and furnace area, and an enclosed back stairs, was built in 1956 and dedicated the next year. For the first time, Elsah school children had indoor toilet facilities.

In 1970 District 100 closed the Elsah unit, deciding that it was better to bus the students to other units. Many citizens objected, and tried to forestall this event, but could not get enough support on the School Board, which is largely a Jerseyville oriented body, to carry their protest.

Given the conditions of today, such changes are inevitable, though at least in part regrettable. The values of close cooperation, of neighborliness, of contact with pupils free of inevitable multiple mimeographed forms and other impersonalities of the large school are lost. On the other hand, facilities are gained, and opportunities for the pupils to move toward the restless, mobile, machine-oriented society in which they will have to live.

The Elsah School facility was bought at auction from District 100 by the Village of Elsah, and now has become their Civic Center. Thus the building constructed in 1857 at the direction of Elsah's founder, General James Semple, continues to function as a

center of village life. Proof of this is the fact that the Elsah volunteer firemen packed the old building with parents and children on December 19th for a Christmas party. Santa Claus Barnes arrived on the fire truck and distributed presents to this latest generation of Elsah area children.

Getting to Elsah

Mrs. Myrtle Rowling, of Jerseyville, first taught at Elsah as a substitute during the latter part of 1917, teaching full-time the next year.¹ She went on to teach in country schools in the area for more than forty years. Her colorful account of her first arrival in Elsah gives a good picture of how different the conditions were even in the early twentieth century.

Mrs. Rowling : At the time that I went there, I was attending high school in Kane, my home town, and Mr. Paul Fenity, who was principal at Elsah, called me to substitute for him because he knew I was interested in becoming a teacher, and the principal agreed to let me go for a couple of weeks of substitute work. It was kind of a thrilling experience.

Mr. Fenity told me to change trains at Lockhaven. And of course I did just as he told me because I had never been to Elsah before. And I got on the train at Kane, the C. & A., and then I came to Jerseyville and changed to the old bluff line, and when I got to Lockhaven I changed cars. They said it was nine o'clock at night. As we started down the track, I realized that we wasn't going towards what I thought Elsah was, and I mentioned it to the man across the aisle. His name was McDowell-Dewey's relation-- and he stopped the train and we had to back up to the station to let me off. But the other train had already pulled out for Elsah, so at that time there weren't any cars around at all, and he said he only had one way to get me to Elsah so that I could teach the next morning, and that was on one of these old handcars. So that was my first entrance into Elsah.

Interviewer: On a handcar?

M. R.: And that was the only way we had to travel then. I remember that if we wanted to go to the show in Grafton or wanted to get out of Elsah in any way, well, that was our transportation.

Int.: Did you lift it onto the track?

M. R.: We lifted it onto the track, and then they had these handlebars, I call them, you worked it with you know, and it was quite an experience for me because I'd always been on the level country and prairie land, and to be around the bluffs and hills, and as we'd go around these curves, I thought sure I was going to be in the river most any time. And one time, about 10 o'clock at night, the thing did jump the track and started down the river bank, and Noah Johnson,² who was the ticket agent at Lockhaven, who was experienced in travelling that way, he knew by the vibration on the track that something had happened to the group in back

of him. And he stopped and got his handcar turned around on the track, and came back and helped us get up the riverbank and get back on the track again.

Int.: So that's how you got to Elsah?

M. R.: That's right.

Int.: Do you remember anything about the conditions there?

M. R.: Well, we didn't have water in the school. We had to carry it from the spring over by the Methodist Church. There was a coal furnace. I had to do all the janitor work. There were kerosene lights on the walls. It was pretty dim sometimes.

Int.: Where did you live?

M. R.: I stayed with Mrs. Mary Worthey.³ That was when I substituted. Then when they asked me to take the school the next year, I stayed at Miss Elizabeth Keller's, that's Edward Keller's aunt.⁴ When I started, I got \$35 a month, and I paid \$20 of that for board.

I taught forty years and the happiest years of my life were in Elsah and Grafton. It seemed like the people were so sociable and friendly, and they didn't

have much recreation. And I never will forget -- we'd never had coasting parties and skating and things like that at Kane because we were up on the firm land, but see, down in Elsah, the old as well as the young would get on those sleds and slide those hills in between the two Keller's stores. We'd slide down that little hill. We'd go on up the Ames hill and coast down that one. It was remarkable the energy that those older people had to get on there, and Mrs. Worthey was the biggest duck in the puddle.

Notes:

¹The Bluff Line, which ran from Alton to Grafton, joined the Jerseyville line at Lockhaven, near the present Lockhaven Country Club. The line to Elsah first swung up to Beltrees, then returned to the side of the river.

²Noah Johnson was later killed in an explosion of the powder mill at Grafton.

³The Worthey House, later known as the Village Inn, is on LaSalle Street, and is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ned Bradley.

⁴Miss Keller lived on Mill Street in the present Forbes Robertson house.



From Miss Lucy McDow comes this picture of the Elsah School on January 10, 1898. People identified are as follows: Front row: Bill Johnson, director, Elizabeth Keller, teacher, Clara Bates, Mae Hughes, Dolly Barnal, Gertie McDow, Mark Reintges, Willie Tonkinson, Ramsey Vanderslice, Leo Cummings, _____, Nita McDow, Ed Terry, teacher, _____, Ed Pinney, director. Row 2: _____, _____, Leo Johnson, Eva Reintges, Ethel Bates, Kit Pinney, Maymie Besterfeld, Norrie Melford, Mona McDow, Liz Barnes, Grace Melford, Arthur Reed, Edgar Reed. Row 3: Pete Justing, Harry Tonkinson, Walter Howard, _____, Don Keyser, Harry Keyser, Cliff Pinney, Enos Tonkinson, Al Pinney, Davey Reeder, Van Miller, George Bryant, Langford Vanderslice. Back Row: Paul Folson, Allen Hughes, Howard Folson.

Getting to school

In the days before school buses, many country-dwelling students had long walks to school. As one might imagine, they were filled with diversions. Mr. Paul Barnes, Elsah's postmaster, recalled one such interlude from Elsah's past.

Paul Barnes: There were three Brown brothers from Chautauqua - Fern Glen Valley -- Tom, Paul, and Kenneth. Kenneth was the youngest. And then there were two families of Mayhalls that came down with them. They walked every day to school at Elsah. Then there were Daniel Zimmerman and his sister. Daniel is now a missionary in Africa. They all came down together.

This particular morning it was very cold. They had just passed Grassy Hollow there, where the old fisherman, Shaeffer, lived. From that point on there was a double set of tracks which was a siding that

came all the way down to Elsah. When they got right in there, one of them suggested that they would bet a nickel or a dime that Tommy wouldn't put his tongue down on the track. But of course Tommy was old enough to know what would happen. But his brother wasn't and before anybody knew it, he had his tongue down on the track, and of course then he couldn't get his tongue off. And at that time near there was a railroad car, what they called an outfit car, which people employed by the railroad used to live in. At that time Orville Denham, who is Bob Denham's brother, was living in it. Orville had a coal stove there to keep warm, and he had a teakettle on the back of it to give a little moisture to the building. Fortunately it had water in it, and so the kids ran down there and banged on Orville's door and told him what had happened. So Orville grabbed up the teakettle full of hot water, and ran up there and poured it on the track, because it was almost time for the Dinkey to come, and the water freed his tongue. The kids were late for school that morning, because Kenneth had gotten his tongue stuck to the track. And he didn't say much that day in school.

Randolph School

Our information on the Randolph School is still fragmentary, but nonetheless we wanted to offer what we had, and especially to include two interviews, one with Annetta Bechtold Cronin, known by her friends in the Elsah area as Nettie, who went to the school shortly after the turn of this century, and another by her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Wendell Bechtold, who went to the school and later taught there, then, settling in the area, sent all but one of her own children there.

Randolph School was a one-room white frame building that served the public school needs of Beltrees, Randolph, and the Piasa Creek area. Part of the local system, it was supervised by regular visits and tests, and its students showed they could keep up with the rest.

The building was located on the road connecting the Beltrees Road with Lockhaven, on the south side of Piasa Creek, close to the present Alton Police Youth Camp facilities. It was closed in the 1950's, and shortly thereafter burned to the ground.

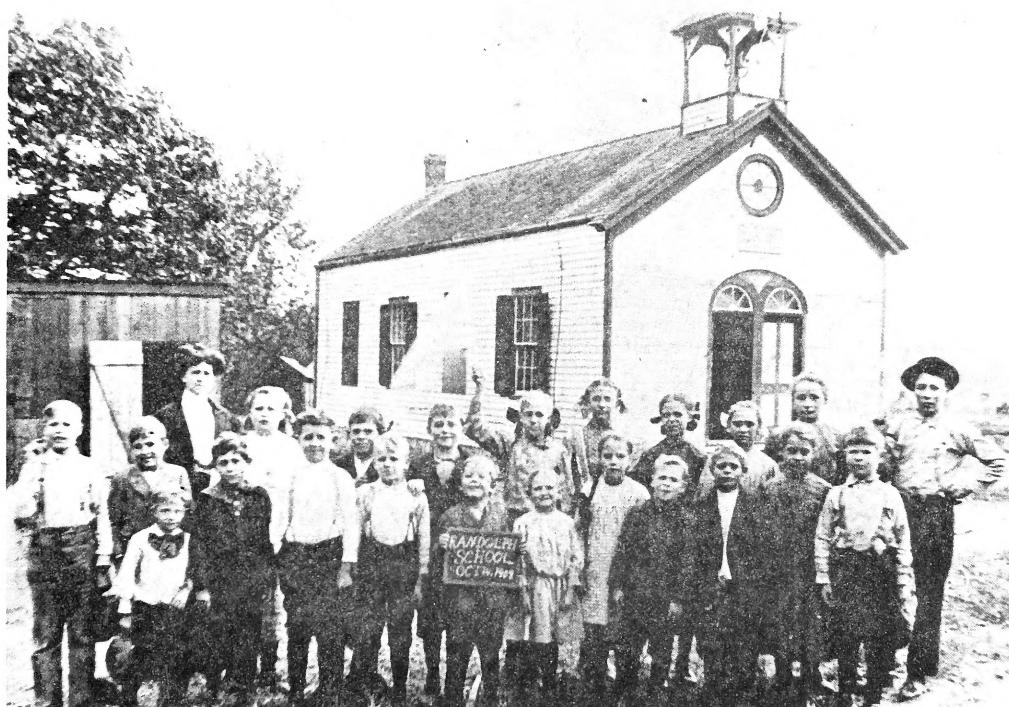
A surviving schedule from March of 1896, now owned by Mr. Paul Barnes, shows that Emma Keller, of Elsah, was the teacher. That month she had a total of forty-seven pupils, twenty-nine boys and eighteen girls. For her twenty-one days of work during the month she was paid \$40. The names of her pupils, including St. Peters, Lock, Fessler, Bechtold, Wyman, Lawless, Spatz, and others are

all familiar in the area.

One surviving report card for the early part of the century shows that the sixth grade, under Miss Bertha Striuf, studied spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, language or grammar, history, physiology, civics, agriculture, drawing, and Illinois history.

Two surviving textbooks show that standard materials were available for study. Dodge's Elementary Geography, published by Rand, McNally in 1911, and used shortly thereafter at Randolph School, was up-to-date in every way. Full of maps and photographs, it represents the best that was available at the time.

The seventh grade was somewhat less fortunate in Lights of Literature, another Rand McNally book of the same vintage. This book uses material by Bryant, Irving, Macaulay, Lamb, Poe, Franklin, Whittier, Washington, Longfellow, Lincoln, Tennyson, Dickens, Daniel Webster, and John Boyle O'Reilly. All were standard authors, but none were recent. Still this was the usual school fare of the time. We are indebted to John and Esther Heitzman for the chance to look at these texts.



Randolph School on October 14, 1909. 1st Row: John Heitzman, Roy Fessler, Elmer Hoffman, Bill Goodyear, Edgar Langley, Elizabeth Wendell, Florence Stringer, Elmer Stringer, George Gilbert, Stella Gilbert, Jack Hoffman. 2nd Row: John Goodyear, Clarence Langley, Ethel True, Bill Gilbert, Joe Bechtold, Ollie Stringer, Mabel Rae Heitzman, Beulah Gilbert, Annie Wendell, Nettie Bechtold, Roy Stringer. Teacher, Elizabeth Keller.

a student recalls

Mrs. Annetta Cronin, of Elsah, went to Randolph School as a child, and recalls the experience well.

Interviewer: How many teachers did they have there?
 Mrs. Cronin: Well, they had only one for all eight grades. They were pretty good teachers, too. Lizzie Keller was my first teacher.

Int.: Did you used to walk down there?

A. C.: We walked, from the Welsh's place, up on Elsah Hills. We lived in that great big house that burnt down. It was three miles one way.

Int.: How did they heat the building? They had a coal stove. They only had one in the middle of it. And whenever it got real cold, we all hunkered up to the front seats where we could get the heat. That's when we wore sacks on our feet to go to school. Gunny sacks. Mama tied gunny sacks around our legs so we could walk on the ice. We used to go right over a

picket fence. We used to have that much snow. We don't have winters like that any more.

Int.: Where did the children go after eighth grade?

A. C.: Well, there was nobody went anywhere then. They all got jobs. I was only twelve years old when I started working for Mrs. Worthey down here at the boarding house. Everybody got jobs. Just got to the eighth grade and that was it. Everybody went to work. The boys all went to work for thirty dollars a month and board. My brothers all did. They never got no high school. There wasn't any way. Horse and spring wagon was about all anybody ever had, or a horse and buggy. And they wouldn't drive their horse every day. Pop wouldn't let the boys use the horse only on Wednesday night and Sunday. They didn't run around like they do with automobiles.

a teacher recalls

Mrs. Elizabeth Bechtold of Beltrees taught in the Randolph School in the early 1920's. In an interview she recalled her experiences as a teacher there.

Interviewer: Do you remember what you taught there?
 Mrs. Bechtold: In those days mostly it was geography, history, Illinois history, arithmetic, reading, and grammar, as we called it in those days. We didn't have science and other things they have now. In seventh and eighth grade we had a history called "Old World Backgrounds," but it was mostly about Greece and its gods and things from years gone by. I never did see any point in that. I don't think any of the students remembered those names. But outside of that, you know, it was mostly just reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and history.

Interviewer: Did you have any trouble managing all eight grades at once?

E. B.: Well, I didn't think so at the time. Maybe now they would think I did. But I even had about forty-two pupils. Sometimes it would only be in the thirties. Oh, they weren't angels. I had to correct them, but I really didn't have serious problems.

Int.: Did you go to high school in Alton?

E. B.: I took ninth grade, and then I went to Normal, Illinois for a teacher's course. And that's all I needed at the time to have what we called a second-grade certificate. The course at Normal was equivalent to a second year of high school. That's all you needed

in those days.

Int.: Can you tell me anything about the facilities?
 E. B.: It was an old frame building. It was awful hard to heat, I know that.

Int.: Mrs. Cronin said they had one coal stove in the middle.

E. B.: Well, that was when she went. When I taught they had sort of a furnace. It was a big round thing with a jacket around it. It was up on the teacher's platform, and threw heat up and over the students. When I taught they just hung their coats on hooks at the back. Later years, though, they did add a cloakroom.

There was a spring down the hill, just before you get to that youth camp. We carried our bucket of water up there to drink. It was a good one, as far as that went, but they got city water when it came as far as Lockhaven.

Int.: Did you have to do your own janitor work?

E. B.: Yeah, had to clean up the school every evening. Sometimes I'd get the kids to help me a little, but there was no janitor. They mowed the school yard before school started, you know. But it sure wasn't a very nice place for a school, because the creek was there for one thing, which was sort of dangerous. And there wasn't a level spot. I don't know why Joe¹ and them used to love to play ball. They couldn't hardly have a ball diamond, because the train track was right below down there. But I think it stood about at the corner of the Lock place, and they gave that ground for that years.

Joseph Bechtold, Mrs. Bechtold's husband.

Otterville School

HEF member Lila D. Flautt wrote and supplied us with this memoir of Otterville School, surely historically the most important in this area.

In the rain on April 1st some sixty years ago I started to the first Free School in Illinois, located at Otterville, Illinois. I was the fourth generation in my family to attend. I had walked half a mile under what I remember as the largest of umbrellas, though now I know it was the girl that was small. When I reached the school grounds, the school doorway was filled with children of all sizes, and one big boy called to me, "Lila, look at the canary up in the maple tree." I peered out from under the umbrella but didn't see any bird. All the children started yelling, "April Fool! April Fool."

For over twenty years Miss Minnie Bartlett taught the primary room, and each year all pupils entering first grade started for the last month of school. The term ended May 1st with her traditional picnic to Panzy Hill. She sent food on ahead, and all walked to the wooded area where there was a spring and pansies grew wild.

Going back to the year 1828 we can trace the beginnings of the school in the experience of Dr. Silas Hamilton. After the death of Silas, his only child, Dr. Hamilton, formerly of Tinsmouth, Vermont, came to Illinois from the state of Mississippi. Tired of slavery and the effects it had on other human beings, he sold his plantation and brought twenty-eight slaves, emancipating them in Cincinnati, Ohio. All went to make lives of their own except Henry Walker and his wife Vena, the butler and housekeeper, and George Washington, who was too young.

Dr. Hamilton's older brother, Nathaniel, and his family, had migrated from Vermont to Ohio the year after the Northwest Territory opened. He lived in Ohio until 1817, when he and his family came to Illinois in time to vote in the election in which Illinois became a state. Two of Nathaniel Hamilton's neighbors in New Design, Illinois, were Shadrack Bond, later the first governor of the state, and Rev. Lemmon.

It was to Nathaniel Hamilton's home that Dr. Silas Hamilton, his wife, and the three black freedmen came to make a headquarters while looking for a place for a permanent home for his family, a group of friends from Mississippi, and other members of the Hamilton family from Vermont.

Dr. Hamilton and his nephew Thomas rode on

horseback, crisscrossing this part of the state in search of the new location. They rode as far north as Springfield, as far west as Quincy, and south until they came to what is now the town of Otterville, and although it was prairie, it reminded him of Vermont, as the stream that ran through Tinsmouth is also named Otter Creek. This place had everything the pioneers needed; wood, springs, streams, and fertile land. So this site was chosen. During the period they were in New Design, Dr. Hamilton's wife, Hannah Ives Hamilton, died and is buried there.

In 1830 Dr. Hamilton, the three blacks, and Thomas Hamilton and his family moved to the Otter Creek settlement. They were followed shortly by the others. Dr. Hamilton became the first physician in Jersey County (then a part of Greene).

In 1834 there was a great deal of illness, and as he was serving the entire county making house calls on horseback, he became very tired and overworked, and began to think he might also die, so he made a will in which was the provision for a primary school for his relatives and friends of the neighborhood, bequeathing a sum of \$4,000, to be divided into two equal portions, \$2,000 for the erection of a building suitable for a primary school and a place of public worship, and \$2,000 for the support of a teacher. The will also named the exact location of the building to be near a place called Four Corners. This was on the first road through Jersey County from Bloomington to Springfield, then to Carrollton, Otter Creek settlement, and Grafton.

The doctor died in November, 1834, and the land named in the will was purchased by the trustees named: Thomas M. Hamilton, his nephew, and Gilbert Douglas, his brother-in-law and the uncle of Stephen A. Douglas. It was to visit these relatives that Stephen A. Douglas first came to Illinois from Vermont. The rest is well-known history.

The school building was started in 1835 and finished for the first term of school in 1836. James Osgood was the first teacher. I have the reader used by Elizabeth Hamilton (Rogers) that first term, as well as the Bible used, as Bible reading and prayer were part of the teachings. George Washington was among the first pupils; thus the school was integrated.

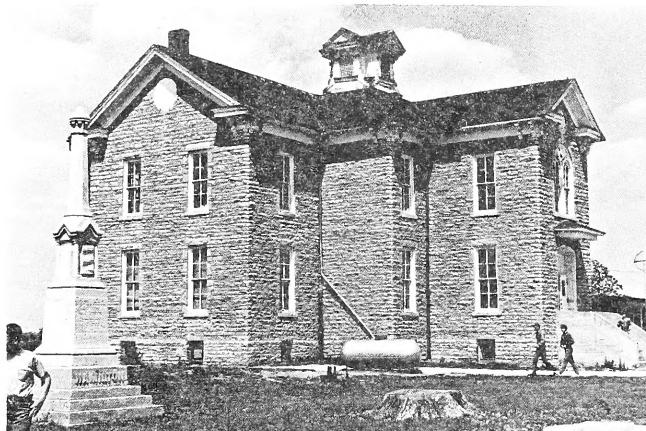
Nearly all the homes of this period were log, so the community was proud of the two-story stone school. In a letter of January, 1854, Edwin Deming wrote to his father in Ohio, "The weather has been very cold and has been for two weeks. We have ten inches of snow held down by sleet and sleeting is good as can be. . . . Mr Watkins school is a complete 'cir-

cus' and his singing school no better. I think after his three months is done they will have no further need of his services. The Otter Creek Sewing Society have turned their meetings into knitting parties proceeds applied to building a pulpit in the upper room of the stone school house. Mr Pierson of Alton furnishes the yarn and pays them for knitting the socks. They have the lumber paid for on the spot beside have two nice quilts to sell and money applied the same way. I think they will have a pulpit before summer."

The first building was used until 1872 when the Hamilton Trustees found it unsafe and contracted for the building that is there today. That structure was finished in 1873. The builder and contractor was Joseph Knight, and the building cost \$10,000. The stone from the first building was used up beyond the basement windows and the rest of the stone came from a quarry just south of the Beatty Mound—with the exception of one stone on the west side that came from Grafton Quarry.

Leslie Dougherty, who is 92 years old, is the oldest living pupil who attended the school. He was present at the closing banquet. He tells of the time when he attended, when all lessons were written on slates, and recalls how the boys would drag the slate pencils to create noises. He also remembers how hard it was to concentrate on lessons when the men of the neighborhood raced their beautiful horses and buggies up and down the street while school was in session. It was even worse after a snow, when they raced in cutters with sleigh bells on the horses.

The Otterville School, part of District 100, was closed in May of 1971.



Otterville School shortly before its closing in May, 1971. The memorial to Dr. Silas Hamilton erected by George Washington appears at the left of the picture.

Mr. Dewey McDow



Citizens of Elsah, and many visitors, will long remember with great fondness Mr. Dewey McDow, of LaSalle Street, who passed away on November 24, 1972. Mr. McDow was born in Elsah in November of 1896, of a family which early settled this area, and after whom our neighboring farm town of Dow is named. He was educated in the Elsah School and spent much of his working life as a railroad man. For a time he operated the well-known Dinkey that ran on the Bluff Line from Alton to Grafton. The first issue of our newsletter contained an interview with Mr. McDow about his work in the Elsah quarry as a young man. A First World War soldier, Mr. McDow remembered vividly the review of American troops by General Pershing in Paris at the close of the war.

Always friendly and helpful, Mr. McDow joined old Elsah with its new citizens and visitors by his willingness to reminisce, to discuss the passing scene, or supply directions to those needing them. He will be recalled with warmth.

news notes

Contributions:

We are grateful for the many contributions given HEF by members and donors. We are especially grateful to Mr. Harold E. Bunting, of Kirkwood, Mo., who has given HEF a munificent gift in the form of eight three-year sustaining memberships. He noted in his letter to us that these are "in memory of Mrs. Ethel St. Peters Bunting, who was born January 1, 1882, in a farm just outside Elsah. She attended the Metho-

dist Church and also attended the eight grades at the Elsah School."

We are also very grateful to Mr. Joseph Knight for his donation of \$75.

Last summer, during the Principia adult summer session, Larry Groce, a Principia graduate who now has three record albums to his credit, gave HEF a benefit concert. This gave us \$107. We are grateful to Larry for his generosity.

Missouri Historical Society Tour

Our big fall effort went to providing the Missouri Historical Society with a tour of Elsah and the area on October 7th. To summarize what the Missourians could see, we offered the following:

¶ A tour of Elsah including the Village Hall, which was the tour center, the Village Civic Center, First Church of Christ, Scientist, the historic Elsah Methodist Church, Mrs. Frances Grayson's home, the Village Inn, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bradley, the Holt home, the Doll Museum, and the home of Mrs. Edith Lazenby on upper Mill Street.

One special treat was a visit to the William Wieland farm on Route 100. This old farm was originally developed by Colonel Josiah Askew, an early settler and Illinois militiaman. The present house is more recent, but is filled with family antiques and heirlooms, many with a very long Illinois history.

Principia College provided a tour and lunch for the visitors, as well as a shuttle bus to the historic Eliestown estate begun in 1889 by Henry Turner of St. Louis.

The visitors were also able to visit Chautauqua, and the homes there of Mr. Catto Huff and Mrs. Marjorie Dintelmann.

About three hundred visitors took part in this tour and seemed to enjoy themselves very much. We of HEF enjoyed putting it on, and are grateful for the help of a great number of people. The Timmermieres of Alton, who are members both of HEF and the Missouri Historical Society, were extremely helpful with suggestions and practical work.

Mr. Carl Benziek generously displayed his braided rugs, and gave a demonstration of how such rugs are made.

Mr. Robert Levis of Alton allowed the foundation to use a painting of his done by Frederick Oakes Sylvester in the Elsah area as the basis for its souvenir. This color reproduction is by far the best ever made of a painting by the Poet-Painter of the Mississippi, even if it is small. An overprinting has allowed us to offer copies of this reproduction, with its explanatory text, for sale. It is available from HEF for \$2.25, plus postage if necessary.

Missouri Historical Society Director, Mr. George Brooks, was also very helpful, as was Gale Yerges, President of the Women's Association, and Virginia Stith. It is not possible personally to thank all that worked to help make this tour a success.

Special recognition should also go to Mrs. Inge Mack, our own director of the tour, whose supervision of all aspects of the event was vital.